

**Danny Gallivan
(1917-1993)**

Broadcast Legend



Danny Gallivan

Danny Gallivan (April 11, 1917 - February 24, 1993) was a Canadian radio and television broadcaster and sportscaster.

Born in WHITNEY PIER IN Sydney, Nova Scotia, Gallivan began his broadcast career at a local radio station in Antigonish, Nova Scotia while attending St. Francis Xavier University. He taught high school algebra and Latin in Antigonish following graduation and took a stint in the Canadian Army before returning to continue his broadcasting career.

In 1946, Gallivan moved to a radio station in Halifax where he became sports director. He was spotted by a CBC producer of Hockey Night in Canada while in Montreal to broadcast a junior hockey playoff between Halifax and Montreal and was asked to fill in for a sick announcer in 1950. In 1952, Gallivan began a 32-year stint with Hockey Night in Canada, mostly calling games involving the Montreal Canadiens, before retiring after the 1983–1984 season. Gallivan did play-by-play for over 1,800 Canadiens games on both television and radio in his career.

Gallivan was known for his colourful descriptions of action on the ice. Hard shots became "cannonading drives"; saves were "scintillating" rather than merely spectacular; and, after a save, pucks tended to get caught in a goalie's "paraphernalia" (goalie equipment). Sometimes if the goaltender made a fantastic or impossible save, he would refer to it as a "hair raising save", he would also use words such as "anemic" to describe an offense, powerplay, etc. The ultimate Gallivanism was a word he coined: the "spinarama," which described a player evading a check or when a player would deke a defender with a sudden 180- or 360-degree turn. Its chief practitioner was Canadiens' defenceman Serge Savard, so the move was also known as "The Savardian Spinarama".

When a university professor wrote to Gallivan protesting that there was no such word as "cannonading," Gallivan wrote back and replied, "*There is now.*" The Canadian Oxford Dictionary includes an entry for "spinarama."

On October 9, 1970, he had the distinction of announcing the Vancouver Canucks' first-ever game in the NHL, a 3–1 loss to the Los Angeles Kings on CKNW radio.

Gallivan was active in retirement, working with several charities, and was the recipient of several television/broadcast industry awards. He also made a cameo appearance as the voice of sportscaster Ferlin Fielddigger in the 1981 animated TV special, *The Raccoons On Ice*.

Broadcast legend

was baseball

standout



They say Danny Gallivan could
have been a major-leaguer

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BY T.J. COLELLO
CAPE BRETON POST

WHITNEY PIER

Although phrases like 'cannonading drive' or 'Savardian spinarama' have little or no context outside the game of hockey, ask even the most passive fan of the great Canadian game and they'll swear it's the Queen's English.

But what many people don't know about the father of such colourful hockey vocabulary — the late Danny Gallivan — is that he was not only one of the most proficient verbal artisans of the sport, but the **Whitney Pier** native was also a standout baseball player before he hung up his cap and grabbed a microphone, bringing 1,900 games to life over his 32-year career as a play-by-play man for the Montreal Canadiens.

Gallivan was gifted with much more than a powerful voice, but a 'cannonading' arm to match. He was a strong pitcher and led teams to a number of area titles, as well as a Maritime Intermediate Baseball Championship in 1937 as a member of the St. Theresa's Parish team.

The St. Theresa's squad was managed by his older brother, the late Father William Gallivan — known to many as 'Father Bill'.

"I was younger than him and we'd come home from school," said Pat Gallivan, 82, Danny's younger brother. "We had a barn in the back of the

house and about quarter to four he'd get the gloves and strap everything on me and drive (pitches). Trying to catch them ... he had a lot of speed.

"They used to say in some of the write-ups that he'd have 20 or 21 strikeouts. He was a power pitcher."

In 1938, Danny was invited to the New York Giants training camp, but an early injury to his magical arm cut short his hopes of a major league career.

With his baseball dreams halted, the recent Sydney Academy grad returned home to work a summer at the coal piers before heading to St. Francis Xavier University to pursue a bachelor of arts degree, with the eventual prospect of teaching. Gallivan was among 13 siblings — nine boys and four girls — growing up at the corner of East Broadway and Victoria Road. His father, Luke, also worked at the piers, while his mother, Elizabeth, was at home.

Fortunately for millions of future hockey fans, Gallivan's career path would take a sharp turn from the classroom.

While at St. FX, he landed a job with campus radio station CJFX, where he broadcast his first hockey game in December of 1943. Also hitting the airwaves was his friend and roommate, the late Hollywood director and producer Daniel Petrie, of Glace Bay. After serving overseas with the army, Gallivan moved to Halifax in 1946 to become the voice of the



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY PEARL GALLIVAN

The late Danny Gallivan in an undated photo. The Whitney Pier native brought over 1,900 games to life over his 32-year career as a play-by-play man for the Montreal Canadiens.

St. Mary's junior hockey team.

During the Memorial Cup playoff series being held at the historic Montreal Forum, his talents were discovered. When the Habs regular announcer, Doug Smith, took ill on New Year's Eve of 1950, Gallivan was asked to take his place.

By 1952, the gig was his and his alone.

"He was always sports-minded towards hockey and baseball," said Pat Gallivan. "I can remember him home in the 1930s, upstairs, taking off Foster Hewitt's 'he shoots, he scores!' — you'd hear it all over the house. He always had an inkling for it.

"He took it to heart and had a great delivery. People admired him from coast to coast."

Gallivan was the voice of

the Montreal Canadiens for 16 of their Stanley Cups over a career which spanned more than three decades. He was a durable broadcaster as well, not missing an assignment during his first 22 seasons.

The last time anyone would hear about 'scintillating saves' or pucks being lodged in players' 'paraphernalia' would be the 1984 playoffs. Gallivan retired following the Canadiens' exit at the hands of the New York Islanders, due to a severe illness which rendered him blind in one eye.

According to the Saturday, Feb. 27, 1993 edition of the Montreal Gazette, Gallivan died in his sleep Feb. 25, 1993, apparently succumbing to heart failure brought on by bronchitis. He had just returned from a golf trip with friends in South Carolina.

A who's who of celebrities attended Gallivan's funeral service in Montreal, with his brother, Father Bill, officiating the service. Petrie gave the final commendation and farewell.

Gallivan is survived by his son, Danny Jr., and three daughters: Pat, Paula and Susan. He was predeceased by his wife, Eileen, who died in 1981.

Danny Jr. said his father was a religious man and was quite private.

"It seems kind of inconsistent, given his career and the things he did in the public light," he said. "He didn't seek out the limelight, in fact, he tried to avoid it."

"The church and religion meant a lot to him and he was very close to his brother, Monseigneur Bill Gallivan."

Danny Gallivan was induct-



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY MARIE BOND

picture of the St. Theresa's parish team from Sydney that won the Maritime Intermediate Baseball Championship in 1937. Front row: Danny Gullivan, Lar Hartigan, P.J. (Joker) LeBlanc, Ellis Neville and Roy White; second row: John W. and Louis Mombourquette, Fr. William Gullivan (manager), Doug MacCormack, Jim Cusack; third row: Rusty O'Dell, Les Topshee, Alex (Fishy) Nicholson, Ray Powell, Went Murray. In front is scout Frank MacNeil. Missing from the photo is Herman Timmons. Thanks to Marie Bond of Shenacadie for the photo. The late Alex 'Fishy' Nicholson was her father.



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY PAT MACADAM

Shown above are the late Daniel Petrie, left, and the late Danny Gullivan, in a photo from 1940 or 1941 when the two were roommates at St. FX University in Antigonish. Petrie, a Glace Bay native, went on to become a successful Hollywood director, while Gullivan, from Whitney Pier, made his mark on the world as the radio and television voice of the Montreal Canadiens.

Dick Irvin reflects on time spent with longtime broadcast partner

BY T.J. COLELLO
CAPE BRETON POST

SYDNEY

Legendary broadcaster Dick Irvin believes people will always remember the colourful hockey parley of his longtime friend and partner in the booth, Danny Gullivan.

Irvin, who spent 17 seasons on air with Gullivan, said he first met the late broadcaster when the Whitney Pier native arrived as the Habs' full-time voice in 1952. At the time, Irvin's father, Dick Irvin Sr., was coaching the club.

The junior Irvin has been a part of CBC's broadcasting team for 37 years.

"By the time I got working with him 14 years later, it wasn't the case of me just walking in beside this legend and being all starry-eyed about it," said Irvin from his home in Point Claire, Que., just outside of Montreal.

"I knew him personally for a long time and it made it a lot easier for me to do the job, of course."

Irvin said Gullivan understood hockey well and had great

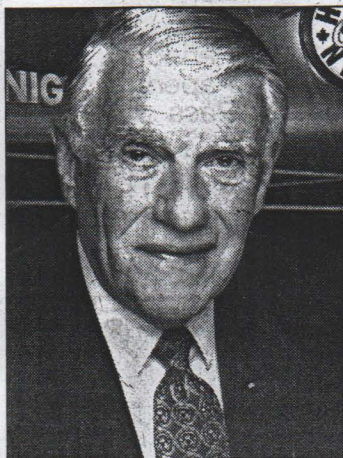


PHOTO COURTESY OF CBC IMAGE GALLERY
DICK IRVIN

anticipation for what was going to happen on the ice.

"He was different, by that I mean he had a wonderful command of language and he used it in his broadcasts," he said. "Danny just concentrated on the game. When I got to be his colour commentator ... he just concentrated on the game and left all the rest of the stuff to me."

"He worked at it — the ability to make the game entertain-

ing. We all tried to do that, but Danny had a leg up on the rest of us because he had such a command of the English language, better than everybody else. That's what set him apart — the words he could use to describe what was going on."

Some of the picturesque language Gullivan used did have origins, according to Irvin.

"The one that everyone remembers is the 'Savardian spinarama'," he said. "He said he went for a walk one day in Oakland, Calif. because he was doing a game for CBC Radio and everything was a 'rama' — bowl-a-rama, laundo-rama. Something happened in the game that night and he used the word 'spinarama' — I'm not sure if it was Savard or somebody did it anyway."

"He was upset one time, I think it was the word 'cannonading', because he got a letter from a university professor in the Maritimes, who said 'shame on you, there's no such a word as cannonading'. Danny wrote back and said 'shame on you, there is now.'"

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PHOTO SUBMITTED BY PEARL GALLIVAN

From left, Dicker MacDonald, Danny Gullivan, Allistair MacNeil and Parker MacDonald in a photo taken at the Ukrainian Hall in Whitney Pier in the 1960s. The four were at a benefit for 'Big' Jim MacLean.



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY PEARL GALLIVAN

A photo at Park Junior High School, circa 1957. Pictured in front is principal Tony Nardocchio, Doug Harvey and school supervisor Duncan Purcell. In the middle are Danny Gallivan and Sr. Elizabeth Gallivan, followed by Cliff Roach. The children in the background are Paul and Joanne Gallivan, Danny's nephew and niece.

I realize there's already a thread on missing Dick Irvin and I agree totally that he and Gallivan were and are the best one-two in play-by-play and commentating of all-time. While Irvin is a walking dictionary of hockey history - dates, places, events and people, he knows them all - Gallivan, on the other hand was the best in his field. My grade 10 English teacher told our class, at the time, to listen to Danny Gallivan if we wanted to know how to use the english language properly! I think we all did after that. I am so glad I aold enough to have lived through those "glory days" as someone has called them. Truly they were "glory days" in Hab's commentating, too. If you have memories of unique phrases Danny Gallivan used please add them to my short list below. Thanks, guys! I know each of them will bring back a time and a place for me.

"the puck got caught up in Dryden's paraphenalia"

**"Robinson stepped gingerly over Bosssston's blueline"
(emphasis mine)**

"Savard used his spinnerrama move to get by O'Reilly"

"the puck careemed off the glass"

**"the puck rickocheted off the boards to the opposing
defenceman"**

"as Lemaire maneuvered the puck through the neutral zone"

*Lafleur feathers a pass to Shutt.

*Cornouyer (sp?) dipsy-doodles over the blueline!

*A SCINTILLATING save by Dryden! (definitely his!)

*What an Enormous save!

.....

What a Cannonating drive by Van Boxmeer. The puck was gobbled up Lemaire. Were a couple of my favorites.

I remember a Gallivan interview done just before he passed away. He said he received a letter from a high-school english teacher once for saying cannonading. She told him there was no such word. He said he sent her a letter back saying "Now there is!"

CANNONADING

Gallivan, Danny (1917-1993)

Danny Gallivan's broadcast career began at CJFX in Antigonish, Nova Scotia while attending St. Francis Xavier University where, upon graduation, he taught high school algebra and latin and did some baseball and hockey broadcasting.

After a two-year stint in the Canadian Army and further experience on CJFX, Danny became sports director in 1946 at CJCH Halifax. His broadcasting of a junior hockey playoff in Montreal between Halifax St. Mary's and the Montreal Royals so impressed the producer of Montreal NHL Hockey broadcasts that when the Canadiens' regular announcer, Doug Smith, became ill in 1950, Danny was asked to fill in. When Smith turned his talent exclusively to football in 1952, Danny Gallivan began what was to be a 32-year association with the Canadiens. Before retiring following the 1983-84 season, Danny had described the play-by-play for more than eighteen hundred games involving the Canadiens.



In "retirement", Gallivan became a goodwill ambassador for "Hockey Night In Canada" and a campaign spokesman for multiple sclerosis in the Atlantic area. He was engaged in fund-raising for the Halifax Cystic Fibrosis Association and was elected chairperson of the selection committee for the "Hockey Hall of Fame". In 1990, the Atlantic Broadcasters' Association, in acknowledging Danny's contribution to the broadcast industry, presented him with its Broadcast Recognition Award.

At its Annual Convention, held in Toronto in 1991, the Canadian Association of Broadcasters inducted Danny Gallivan into the CAB Broadcast Hall of Fame.